

## **TESTIMONY**

Submitted by Tracy Wodatch  
President and CEO

Education Committee Public Hearing  
**March 1, 2023**

### **SB 1097 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL NURSES**

Senator McCrory, Representative Currey and distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Tracy Wodatch. I am the President and CEO at the CT Association for Healthcare at Home, the united voice for the DPH-licensed home health care agencies.

I'd like to address the proposal in SB 1097 An Act Concerning School Nurses.

A few of our smaller, more local non-profit home health care agencies have contracts with their town school systems to provide school nurses. This has been a long-standing practice and one that has served their towns well. However, staffing these positions has been more challenging recently.

While this bill has good intentions and looks to elevate the role and education of the school nurses in Connecticut, which we fully support, we are concerned regarding the current workforce crisis specifically with respect to the nursing shortages. Putting more educational requirements (BSN minimum) on these nurses may be a positive way to promote this specialty, but the timing doesn't seem right. Will the state also be offering financial support to defray the costs of this added educational degree as inflation also plays heavily into this decision.

Lastly, the added fifteen hours of professional development every two years is also a worthy goal; however, Connecticut doesn't have annual professional development requirements for general RN-licensure other than one 2-hour mental health suicide prevention training requirement once every six years. To call out school nurses over RNs, in general, seems inequitable especially with adding fifteen hours over 2 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

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